

Interchurch World Movement of North America

At a meeting in New York City on December 17, 1918, at which 135 representatives of home and foreign mission boards in North America were present, there was unanimous agreement that the time had come for the working bodies of the several communions so to relate their activities as to present a united front to the world. A committee of twenty was appointed to outline a plan for the closer co-operation of Churches, and to present it to various denominational boards that would meet in January. A statement was drawn up by the committee which was subsequently endorsed by more than sixty denominational boards and inter-denominational agencies. In this way the Interchurch World Movement of North America was launched.

The definite understanding of those who have launched the Interchurch World Movement is that it is not an ecclesiastical movement nor an effort to organic church union. It will not disturb the autonomy or interfere with the administration of any church or board. Neither will it undertake to administer or to expend funds for any purpose beyond its own proper administrative expenses. It has a definite and temporary mission. It will not duplicate or conflict with other denominational agencies. It does not assume responsibility or authority in questions of church or missionary policy, recognizing that these belong to the

co-operating agencies and organizations. And they disclaim all statements, by whomsoever made, contrary to this declaration of principles. It is rather a co-operative effort of the missionary, educational and other benevolent agencies of the evangelical churches of the United States and Canada to secure the necessary resources of men and money and power required for their tasks. It is an instrumentality of education, of co-operation and co-ordination of administrative agencies, which it is designed to serve, not to supplant.

As its name implies, the scope of the Interchurch World Movement is co-extensive with the world. Broadly speaking, its task is twofold: (1) to discover the facts, and (2) to indicate the means of dealing with them.

In order to discover the facts, a survey will be made of the whole world, based on geographical rather than ecclesiastical lines. Numerous surveys of the home and foreign fields have been made before, but these have been, by the nature of the case, mainly denominational. The information and experience of many of these existing surveys will be at the disposal of the Interchurch World Movement. When the survey has been completed, the means to be employed in dealing with the facts discovered therein will be as follows:

1. A united budget.
2. A united campaign of publicity and education.
3. A united financial drive.
4. A united programme of work on the mission field and in the local church at home.

On the basis of the world survey it is proposed that a single joint budget be made which shall outline the approximate responsibility of the evangelical churches of North America for the world's welfare. No estimate of the probable amount of this budget will be possible until after the surveys are completed.

POINTS OF THE BUDGET

1. Every item of the budget must approve itself to the judgment of the several missionary or benevolent boards, so far as it relates to the work of each board.

2. It will have the approval of a strong interdenominational committee, aided by experts in the various fields covered; this committee to review and harmonize the details.

3. While the budget will be for a single year, it will take account of the needs of a five year period.

4. This proposal will in no way displace or interfere with the autonomy or responsibility for administration of the co-operating agencies.

5. All funds should be sent, so far as possible, direct to the treasurers of such agencies from their natural constituencies.

6. The full share of each co-operating body in lives and money will be set forth in the budget, as well as the grand total.

7. Provision must be made for receiving and distributing funds which may be contributed without being sent through denominational treasurers. Therefore, a central treasury will be established to which funds given for the united budget, but contributed through ordinary church channels, may be reported by the co-operating agencies. Through this central treasury, also, donors who so elect may contribute directly to the united budget.

8. The functions of the central treasury will be to assemble and report the financial facts connected with the campaign; to disburse funds for the common expense of the campaign, and to serve as a clearing house for the co-operating agencies in order that each may receive its pro rata share of the funds obtained, as agreed on in advance according to its percentage in the united budget.

FINANCES OF THE INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT

1. The movement will be financed out of the funds obtained, not by direct assessment upon participating bodies.

2. The cost of the campaign will depend upon the size of the budget. Before the war it would probably have been reckoned at about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the total. Now it will probably be nearer $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

3. To meet the immediate expenses of the Interchurch World Movement credits will be established by the co-operating boards of the churches. They will not advance money, but will provide credit on which the Movement can borrow. Several boards have already taken action underwriting credit for the Movement.

If any communion has obtained all the money it needs for the next five years it can enter on the other phases of the Movement's programme. It is left to the churches to define the plan by which they will come in on the financial side.

The Board of Missions, at its meeting on February 12, 1919, on the report of the Committee of Twenty, dated January 1919, brought to its attention, took the following action:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Missions has read with interest the communication of February 3, 1919, from the 26th Foreign Missions Conference of North America, and expresses its hope that in the interest of Christian fellowship, the Church will find it possible to co-operate in the Movement as therein outlined to the full extent of its power.

As the financial campaign of the Interchurch World Movement will be held in the Spring of 1920, possibly in March, and as the Every Member Canvass of the *Nation Wide Campaign* will be held December 7, 1919, our campaign will be over before the date of the Interchurch World Movement financial campaign. It seems desirable, however, that we should keep step with the Interchurch World Movement in every way possible.

The above matter was considered by the Board of Missions at its meeting on October 6, 1919. After full discussion it was referred to a committee composed of the Rev. Dr. Ernest M. Stires, the Rev. Dr. B. T. Rogers and the Very Rev. Carroll M. Davis for consideration and report.

The committee offered the following, which was adopted unanimously by the Board.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Missions has read with interest the communication of February 3, 1919, from the 26th Foreign Missions Conference of North America, and expresses its hope that in the interest of Christian fellowship, the Church will find it possible to co-operate in the Movement as therein outlined to the full extent of its power.

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the General Convention be requested to authorize the Board of Missions to carry out such co-operation provided that this Church be not committed in matters of ecclesiastical polity, and that the president of this Board be requested to present the subject to the General Convention.